

# Never too old for exercise

## Senior facility makes sure residents keep fit

By Paul Harber  
GLOBE STAFF

**D**UXBURY — Think of gym rats and most people envision buff 20-somethings continuously pumping iron, or trying to walk to China on the treadmill. You see perfectly toned bodies with sculpted muscles.

If you go to the fitness center at the Village at Duxbury, you will find people pumping iron, and battling for the treadmill, as usual. But these gym rats — such as Jim Frame, who does a full workout before breakfast, and his old Dartmouth College buddy, Bill Sykes — do not have to-die-for biceps or magazine-cover lats. Neither can see very well and their hearing is not as good as it once was.

Frame is 97 and Sykes is 98.

"I didn't do any exercising ever until I came here," said Sykes, hard at work on the Nu-Step cycling machine. "The wonderful thing is it makes me feel better. I think it's why I'm still around."

At Dartmouth College a lifetime ago, he played for the tennis team and later in life he was a golfer at the Duxbury Yacht Club. "But I don't play golf anymore because I can't see where the ball goes."

Frame says the workouts allowed him to regain his strength after heart surgery. And with the strength came a freedom. "If I wasn't strong enough, I would have had to move into an assisted living situation. Working out has kept me more independent."

But do not ever say these fitness enthusiasts are doing well "for their age." Just say they are doing well, no matter what their age.

"We've been doing fitness since fitness was a no-no for seniors," said Bonnie Armstrong, who runs the fitness center at this senior citizen residential community on Kings Way Road, and has been there for most of the 12 years it has been open.

One of the worst enemies of the aging is inactivity. If you don't walk, eventually you will lose the ability to walk. If you don't work your muscles, they will atrophy. The Village at Duxbury counters that medical reality; every day more than 80 of its residents head to the facility to work out, to be seen, and to socialize. They also have workout and fitness classes.

Their effort pays dividends, and gets them noticed.



"We had a massage therapist come here a few weeks ago," said Armstrong, "and he said he's never seen so many physically and mentally fit senior citizens in one place."

Michael Loglisci, president of the Lynnfield-based massage company Relax Your Back, backs up that statement. He says he visits nursing homes, hospitals, and corporations to work on patients and employees with back problems, and was impressed with what he discovered at the Village of Duxbury.

"I've worked on everybody from infants to 100-year-olds. But the muscle tone, and the exceptional mental alertness, of the residents at the Village at Duxbury surprised me," said Loglisci. "Their mobility was impressive."

In the beginning, the fitness center was in a small room in the basement. Recently, it moved upstairs into a bright room that offers plenty of sunlight. It has made a difference. More resi-



PHOTOS BY TCM HERDE/GLOBE STAFF

Resident Lulie Finlay, 93, exercises as she chats with 90-year-old Betty Bradley in the Village at Duxbury's fitness center, while (top photo) Bonnie Armstrong, the facility's fitness director, works with 98-year-old Bill Sykes.

dents are inclined to go to the new fitness center because it is so cheery.

It is equipped with machines — such as the Nu-Way — originally recommended by the Tufts Human Nutrition Center, where all tests were being conducted on aging by Dr. Maria Fiataroni.

"When we first opened, these machines were so intimidating for some," said Armstrong. "But then they got so addicted to them because they felt so good after working out."

Since then, there have been schedules for who could use what machine and when.

"It is an inspiration to come here," said Lulie Finlay, 93, who has been a resident at the facility

for more than a decade. She first went to the fitness center when it was in the basement, but did not return after her initial visit. It was too gloomy, she said.

However, since the relocation of the fitness center upstairs, she is a regular. "You can enjoy what you do and what is all around here. . . . It's stimulating. It gives you a whole new outlook on things. I've been here for 10 years. I thought I knew everyone until I came here."

Armstrong and her staff have worked with senior citizens with all sorts of health issues, from heart problems to paralysis. "We deal with just about everything," said Armstrong. "As long as they are alive, we want to help them move."